



**Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI**

<b>Project Title</b>	Michigan State University C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems IDA Program
<b>Contact Information</b>	Susan Cocciarelli 302C Natural Resources Building East Lansing, MI 48824 (517) 432-4525
<b>Grant Amount</b>	\$87,500
<b>Nonfederal Support</b>	\$87,500
<b>Project Period</b>	September 2004 – September 2009
<b>Highlights</b>	The Michigan State University C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems (MSUSFS) will work in two regions to provide 70 IDAs and microenterprise support for lower-income emerging farmers and entrepreneurs working in farm/food related businesses. Community-based organizations and Michigan State University Cooperative Extension offices will serve as sites for IDA services. Participants must complete “Tilling the Soil of Opportunity,” an entrepreneurial, business planning course for new and expanding agricultural businesses, as well as get involved in structured networking activities. Participants will receive a \$2 to \$1 savings match, which is seen as a source of equity to grow their small businesses.
<b>Target Population</b>	Multicultural farmers and youth who seek to become farmers in two rural regions in southwest lower Michigan, and food and natural resource-based entrepreneurs in northeast Michigan.
<b>Grantee/Collaborative Description</b>	MSUSFS will offer IDAs and support to participants through two of its cooperative extension offices. The Van Buren County office has ten years of financial asset-building experience and served as a lead Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) coalition member in creating a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) initiative. The Presque Isle County office provides community and economic development services along with information programs on agriculture and natural resources. Each site works with a credit union. Presque Isle County works with Onaway Community Federal Credit Union. Van Buren County is working with Country Heritage Credit Union. Both credit unions will assist in IDA development beyond the scope of the contract.